

Case Number:	CM14-0202734		
Date Assigned:	12/15/2014	Date of Injury:	03/11/2003
Decision Date:	02/05/2015	UR Denial Date:	11/19/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	12/04/2014

HOW THE IMR FINAL DETERMINATION WAS MADE

MAXIMUS Federal Services sent the complete case file to an expert reviewer. He/she has no affiliation with the employer, employee, providers or the claims administrator. The expert reviewer is Board Certified in Family Practice and is licensed to practice in California. He/she has been in active clinical practice for more than five years and is currently working at least 24 hours a week in active practice. The expert reviewer was selected based on his/her clinical experience, education, background, and expertise in the same or similar specialties that evaluate and/or treat the medical condition and disputed items/services. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

This is a 64 year old male patient who sustained a work related injury on 3/11/2003. The exact mechanism of injury was not specified in the records provided. The current diagnoses include lumbago, low back pain, sciatica, radiculitis, lumbar, thoracic, osteoarthritis, lower leg, disc degeneration lumbosacral, knee pain, joint pain leg and morbid obesity. Per the doctor's note dated 10/8/14, patient has complaints of low back and left knee pain and ambulates with walker. Physical examination of the left lower extremity revealed crepitus and tenderness in the joint line, decreased flexion, pain with flexion and decreased extension, tenderness at the lumbar spine, tenderness at the facet joint, crepitus, decreased flexion, decreased extension, decreased lateral bending and decreased rotation. Right knee examination revealed tenderness in the joint line, ROM revealed a crepitus, decreased flexion, pain with flexion and decreased extension. The current medication lists include Norco, Toradol, Opana ER, lactulose and Neurontin. Diagnostic imaging reports were not specified in the records provided. Any surgical or procedure note related to this injury were not specified in the records provided. The patient has received an unspecified number of PT visits for this injury. He has had a urine drug toxicology report on 7/31/14 that was consistent for Hydrocodone, Gabapentin and Oxycodone. The patient had been treated by a pain management specialist. He has been using a cane for ambulation. He has been prescribed narcotic medications and injections along with 6 sessions of aqua therapy.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

The Final Determination was based on decisions for the disputed items/services set forth below:

Norco 10/325 mg: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, criteria for use: CRITERIA FOR USE OF OPIOIDS Therapeutic Trial of Opioids Page(s):.

Decision rationale: Norco contains Hydrocodone with APAP which is an opioid analgesic in combination with acetaminophen. According to California MTUS guidelines cited below, "A therapeutic trial of opioids should not be employed until the patient has failed a trial of non-opioid analgesics. Before initiating therapy, the patient should set goals, and the continued use of opioids should be contingent on meeting these goals." The records provided do not specify that patient has set goals regarding the use of opioid analgesic. A treatment failure with non-opioid analgesics is not specified in the records provided. Other criteria for ongoing management of opioids are: "The lowest possible dose should be prescribed to improve pain and function. Continuing review of the overall situation with regard to nonopioid means of pain control. Ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects. Consider the use of a urine drug screen to assess for the use or the presence of illegal drugs." The records provided do not provide a documentation of response in regards to pain control and functional improvement to opioid analgesic for this patient. The continued review of overall situation with regard to nonopioid means of pain control is not documented in the records provided. As recommended by California MTUS a documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects should be maintained for ongoing management of opioid analgesic, these are not specified in the records provided. Whether improvement in pain translated into objective functional improvement including ability to work is not specified in the records provided. With this, it is deemed that, this patient does not meet criteria for ongoing continued use of opioids analgesic. The medical necessity of Norco 10/325 mg is not established for this patient.

Opana ER 40 mg: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, criteria for use: CRITERIA FOR USE OF OPIOIDS Therapeutic Trial of Opioids Page(s).

Decision rationale: Opana ER 40 mg is an opioid analgesic. According to CA MTUS guidelines cited below, "A therapeutic trial of opioids should not be employed until the patient has failed a trial of non-opioid analgesics. Before initiating therapy, the patient should set goals, and the continued use of opioids should be contingent on meeting these goals." The records provided do not specify that patient has set goals regarding the use of opioid analgesic. A treatment failure with non-opioid analgesics is not specified in the records provided. Other criteria for ongoing management of opioids are: "The lowest possible dose should be prescribed to improve pain and function. Continuing review of the overall situation with regard to nonopioid means of pain control. Ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate

medication use, and side effects. Consider the use of a urine drug screen to assess for the use or the presence of illegal drugs." The records provided do not provide a documentation of response in regards to pain control and functional improvement to opioid analgesic for this patient. The continued review of overall situation with regard to nonopioid means of pain control is not documented in the records provided. As recommended by MTUS a documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects should be maintained for ongoing management of opioid analgesic, these are not specified in the records provided. Whether improvement in pain translated into objective functional improvement including ability to work is not specified in the records provided. With this, it is deemed that, this patient does not meet criteria for ongoing continued use of opioids analgesic. The medical necessity of Opana ER 40 mg is not established for this patient.